1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

231 and every well-to-do family keeps a fast, handsome horse with a good saddle and trappings. They will spend freely for the purchase of a showy "Peking" outfit—a saddle edged with brass and trimmed with cloisonné enamel with stirrups to match, and a bright saddle rug. When a horse is unsaddled his head must be pointing to the west. Women as well as men may saddle horses. The Monguor vocabulary for the colors of horses and cows is very rich. They prefer black horses and cows, it being a shamanistic belief that this color is a good omen for the owner and for the increase of the livestock.

•732 The Monguors geld their own horses, many of them being very proficient at this operation. The stallion is thrown on the ground and the region of the operation washed with hot water to sterilize it. The cutting is done with the sharp edge of a piece of porcelain from a freshly broken cup. The scrotum is opened and the testicles taken out. Some wine is then poured in the wound, salt rubbed into it, and the wound stitched up with a large needle, which is first "sterilized" by being rubbed in the hair of the man who is to do the stitching. Three or four threads taken from a woman's needle box are twisted together to form a coarse thread for the purpose. Finally, salt is rubbed liberally over the outside of the wound. The horse is walked around the threshing floor during the day and tied to the pole at night, in order to prevent his lying down for a few days. There is seldom a mishap in performing this operation. Some lamas are skilful in performing the operation. Horses are seldom gelded by crushing of the testicles.

787 For this important operation a shaman chooses a day of good omen. Before the operation is performed, the head of the family burns incense and boughs of cypress, offered to "Heaven and all the spirits." For seven days after the operation no visitors are allowed to enter the courtyard, at the gate of which are hung a bough of cypress and a skein of wool as a sign that a horse has been gelded.[64]

Rich people with large herds brand a mark on the left hip of horses and cows. Sheep are marked by cutting a rough design in the ear or by clipping out a piece of the ear. The Monguors are remarkably gifted at tracking lost animals. Chinese whose animals have strayed or been stolen always ask a Monguor to track them, and a tracker will follow the trail for many days.

231 462 It is women's work, except where shepherds are hired, to take care of the livestock in their stalls and pens and also to go out with them to pasture in the summer rainy season when the grass grows quickly.

231 463 Shepherds are the best paid among those Monguors who work for hire, because of the capital value of the

[64] Note that the same emblems are used to mark the tabu of a room in which childbirth has taken place, as described above. They are, therefore, tabu marks which are not restricted to a single kind of tabu.—O. L.

donkey for the next mile or two. The pigs travel relatively well because they have not been confined and fed in sties all their lives, but have been grazed in the open around the Monguor villages. The same men who buy pigs also buy hog bristles, in which there used to be a large trade. The bristles were sent all the way to Tientsin on the coast of North China and shipped from there to Europe and America for making brushes.

The wool and skin merchants of Hsining also send their buyers into the Monguor country. All of this buying is done directly in the homes of families that have small amounts to sell, with the result that Monguor children, girls as well as boys, grow up fully acquainted with the fluctuation of market prices and the long-drawn-out processes of bargaining. Much of the buying in small quantities is done by the peddlars, especially Muslims. They deal largely in things needed by women, such as needles, colored thread, cotton cloth, cheap jewelry, pepper, and sugar and other condiments, and for the men tobacco and pipes. These things are usually not sold for cash but bartered for eggs and small quantities of grain, wool, or skins. It is customary for Monguor families to provide such peddlars with a place to sleep over night, in return for a small present made to the women of the family; and as most of the bargaining is done by the women, the peddlars are the "radio" of the country, spreading news and interesting gossip as they travel.

Buying and selling are done on a larger scale at fairs. Two or three times a year every important monastery holds special religious performances, around which there spring up markets and fairs. Chinese merchants, after paying a fee to the monastery or the T'u-ssu, pitch their tents and display their merchandise. The fair spreads all over the valley around the monastery. Spades and plows and all kinds of farm implements are for sale, in addition to cotton cloth, satin and silk, jewelry, dishes and crockery, cooking kettles, spices, tobacco and pipes, wine, fruit, saddles and saddle rugs. Chinese quack doctors sell their medicines and profess to diagnose diseases. To these fairs the Monguors bring their horses, cows, sheep, and pigs for sale.

Some of these fairs are especially celebrated and attract Monguors and Tibetans from considerable distances. In the afternoons there are horse races and wrestling matches, singing and dancing and merrymaking, and often, when there has been too much drinking, fights between clans and villages.

A special activity of young Monguor men is the long-distance caravan trade with Tibet, reminiscent of the medieval overland trade in Europe between Italy, France, Germany, and the Low Countries. The big men of the caravan trade going into the interior of Tibet and as far as Lhasa are Chinese merchants. Small merchants, with perhaps only a load or two of goods, attach themselves to these caravans and so do Tibetan lamas and lamas from the Monguor country and from